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Smart Living with Diabetes

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Germ Patrol: The Shopping Mall



Heading to the mall to check out the latest spring fashions? You may want to bring along some hand cleaner!

Turns out malls are full of more than just cool clothes and gadgets. They're also loaded with germs!

Here are some of the dirtiest spots – and how to handle them:

ATM. Unfortunately, cash may not be all you pick up here. Researchers found germs on every button tested on ATM keypads. *Hint: Use knuckles instead of fingertips to tap keys. And*

wash or sanitize hands when done.

Escalator. Researchers found traces of sweat, waste matter and blood on 20 percent of escalator rails tested. *Hint: Avoid touching. If you must to be safe, clean hands afterward.*

Restroom. Researchers report restroom soap dispensers – of all things – are mega germ magnets. One in four tested contained waste and other germs. *Hint: Scrub hands thoroughly with hot water for 15 to 20 seconds after lathering up.*

Fitting room. Research found people often leave germs on clothes they try. *Hint: Always wear underwear. And cover cuts before trying on stuff.*

Makeup counter. One study found 67 percent to 100 percent of makeup counter testers contained bacteria. *Hint: Don't apply. Buy and try makeup. And return if you don't like it.*

It's time for a refresher course on sun safety.

Let's start with how the sun actually burns your skin. Its ultraviolet (UV) light cuts through skin layers, and kills cells beneath that normally make new skin. When that happens, blood flow increases to the burned areas, turning skin red and warm.

But a little burn never hurt anyone, right? *Wrong!* Experts say UV rays can change cells. And cause cancer and early wrinkling.

Over a million cases of skin cancer are diagnosed in the U.S. each year. About 70,000 are melanoma, the deadliest kind. Melanoma is very dangerous, because it can spread to other organs.

The good news is skin cancer can be prevented and treated if found early. The No. 1 way to reduce risk is to limit UV exposure.

Other tips: Wear an SPF 30 (or higher) broad-spectrum (UVA and UVB) sunscreen daily. Cover up (long-sleeves, sunglasses, wide-brim

hat) in the sun. And don't use tanning beds!

Reality check. *Tanning beds are not safe.* Research shows regular use triples – and in some cases even *quadruples* – melanoma risk.

Melanoma is one of the fastest-growing cancers among whites. The number of cases jumped about 2 percent each year between 1997 and 2006. During the same period, indoor tanning skyrocketed.

The World Health Organization recently raised tanning beds to its highest cancer risk category, citing research showing:

- One burn in a tanning bed equals 10 to 12 sunburns.
- Use of tanning beds before age 30 ups melanoma risk by 75 percent.

Remember that next time you think about ducking into a tanning salon.

Still crave that sun-kissed look? Try a sunless tanning spray or lotion!



Want Your Kids to Slim Down? Set an Example!

Want to help your children shed extra pounds? Urge them to exercise. Skip junk food. Eat more veggies, whole grains and healthy proteins (fish, poultry, nuts). And get enough sleep.

They won't listen?

Try taking your own advice. And they just may change their tune!

Researchers at the University of California, San Diego, and the University of Minnesota studied 142 families to pin down parenting skills that work best in getting chunky kids to slim down.

Children in the study were 8 to 12 years old. All were overweight or obese.

Parents enrolled them in physical activities. And introduced them to healthier food. But according to the study, published online in the journal *Obesity*, kids were *most likely* to lose weight if their parents lost weight, too!

Since 1980, childhood obesity has tripled in the U.S. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates one-third of American children and teens are now overweight.

Extra pounds up the risk for many conditions, including type 2 diabetes, heart and lung disease, asthma, migraine, depression, and even cancer.

Want your kids to shape up? Practice what you preach. In other words: Eat right. Exercise. Get plenty of sleep. And shape up, yourself!

Can a Part-Time Diet Work?

Don't have the patience for a full-time diet? You might want to try a *part-time* low-carb one.

In fact, a new study suggests you may lose *more weight* if you only cut back on carbohydrates sometimes. Carbs are foods like bread, pasta and potatoes.

British researchers followed 100 overweight women for six months. Those who ate 50 grams or less of carbs two days a week (but ate normally the rest of the week), lost an average of *four pounds more* than people who restricted calories to 1,500 mg every day.

Why would that happen?

Study author Michelle Harvie, a research dietician at University Hospital of South Manchester, England, says it boils down to the fact that you feel less hungry when you only cut carbs occasionally.

So you're less likely to cheat on your diet.

Plus, she says, studies show you have less energy if you limit calories every day. That means you could wind up feeling run-down. And that makes you crave *more* food.

So what can you eat on your two very low-carb days?

The diet allows for one piece of fruit. Other foods on the menu include: protein and healthy fats (nuts, chicken and fish). And veggies like leafy greens, peppers, mushrooms, broccoli, eggplant, and cauliflower. *Bon appétit!*



Cool Hands Boost Workout

Do you get overheated and throw in the towel early when you exercise? Or skip workouts altogether because you get too hot and bothered?

New research suggests you may just need to *cool it!*

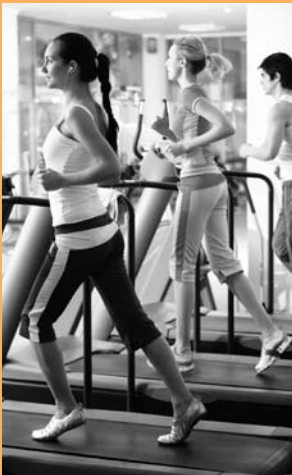
Stanford University researchers studied two-dozen obese women. None were regular gym goers. And researchers wanted to see if keeping them cool could get them on the treadmill. And keep them there longer.

They split the women, ages 30 to 45, into two groups. Both sets exercised three days a week for 12 weeks. But one group held a device chilled to about 61 degrees Fahrenheit during cardio workouts.

The findings: the exercisers with cool hands felt less sweaty and tired. So they worked out harder and longer. And were more likely to stick to the program!

"Obese women often complain about sweating and getting tired because they're walking around with extra insulation," said lead study author Stacy Sims. "If you can slow the rate internal temperature rises and cool someone who is obese, they don't store as much heat and don't feel as uncomfortable. They can do more work."

Want to try it? Researchers suggest holding cold water bottles while exercising. *Have a cool workout!*



Break Out the Blueberries!

Now here's some sweet news. A new study found apples and blueberries may lower the risk of type 2 diabetes.

Researchers at Harvard University Public School of Health tracked the eating habits of 200,000 men and women over 24 years.

Their findings, published online in the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*: blueberry lovers in the bunch – those who ate at least two half-cup servings a week – were 23 percent less likely to develop type 2 diabetes than those who ate few or no blueberries.

Ditto those who ate five or more apples a week.

The likely reason: Apples and blueberries are packed with cell-protecting antioxidants and fiber.

This isn't the first time blueberries have been touted for their protective powers. Research shows they're also good for the ticker. One study found people who ate berries for two months saw a huge drop in blood pressure and a boost in "good" (HDL) cholesterol.

So sprinkle blueberries on everything – muffins, cereal, salad, yogurt... you name it!

Some other blood-sugar-friendly foods:

- **Oats.** Research shows oats lower "bad" (LDL) cholesterol and improve insulin resistance. That's because they're packed with fiber. The easiest way to get your oats: your morning bowl of cereal. But you can also slip oats into everything from cookies to pancakes.
- **Dairy.** A study found women who ate over 1,000 milligrams of calcium and 800 International Units (IU) of vitamin D a day cut their diabetes risk by 33 percent. Your best bet: drink skim milk with some meals. And snack on yogurt or cottage cheese!
- **Greens.** Fiber-rich greens top the list, too. *Enjoy!*

